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AT TWO PLACES

Production of Sugar in Philippine Islands.

METHODS OF MANUFACTURE

Crude Reduction—Ancient Features
Of Mills and Fields—Prices—
Land Values.

(Manila Freedom.)

Sugar, one of the articles of great consumption in all the markets of the world, for its real utility in the fabrication of many other products of human industry, is and was always the subject of many a conversation and discussion so we shall speak of it but in a few words.

In this article, however, our object is to speak only of the sugar cultivated, fabricated and exported from the Philippines, for I think that of other countries is well known in its nature and mode of fabrication, and also because our principal object is to make known to our friends in America the importance, the progress and novelty and above all the profit that can be obtained with this product in the Philippines when it is cultivated with ability.

All the provinces of the archipelago produce and fabricate the sugar in more or less quantity, but specially at Pampanga on the island of Luzon, and on the island of Negros one of the islands of the group of Visayas. On the other provinces, though it is cultivated, is it not made their principal agricultural product.

In Batangan for example it is coffee, and hemp on North and South Camarines as well as in Albany and Sorsogon. The pith of the cocoanuts is the chief product of Romblon, and each island has its own principal product.

The principal of these two sugar producing centres is no doubt Negros not only because of the great quantity it exports but because of the better quality. We will make a short narration of the production of this article in the province of Pampanga, that after we may occupy ourselves better with what concerns Negros.

In the said province of Pampanga, as the property is greatly distributed among many owners and there are many debts, there are scarcely three or four owners whose produce is of regular quantity, the majority produces no more than 100, 150, or 200 piculs, a measure of Pampanga of a conic form and equivalent to about 87 1/2 to 100 lbs.

The price of the land in this province is generally (at) \$80 the hectare, which is equal to about 2 acres, this for first class ground, \$65 to \$70 a hectare the second class.

Each picul is worth in Pampanga \$3 for the first class sugar, \$2.25 for second class and \$1.50 for the third. In Manila they are worth \$6.00, \$5.00 and \$3.50 respectively.

The majority of the machines are of blood, so called because the mill is generally worked by buffaloes, few being worked by steam.

We will not detain ourselves in describing the mode and process of fabrication for it is rather imperfect though the sugar brought from this province is not altogether bad, this is because the land being old in this cultivation has a good moisture, and because they have it in distillation for a long time.

Let us occupy ourselves with the sugar in the island of Negros. Here the land is very fertile and in many places the ground has never before been cultivated, though the whole island is one big plantation of cane. The estates are of great extent, the smallest being from 500 to 800 hectares, and others reaching the extension of from 1000 to 2000 hectares.

The amount of sugar gathered from these estates is generally in proportion to it, and the estate that produces the least gives from 1500 to 2000 piculs; the majority produces 6000, 8000 and 10,000 and there are some that produce from 15,000 to 30,000 and even 40,000 piculs.

This sugar is classified into four classes: 1st class of dry and fine grain like sand having the color of very clear amber; second class, good, fine grain, and having the color like dark amber; third class, of thick grains and darker colors; and, lastly, the Femih class called corrieinte which is of a chocolate color, this is simply employed for distillation of wines and alcohol.

There is if it is wanted a fifth class called by the natives "dubit" but this is molasses rather than sugar. It is black and dirty but it does excellently for alcohol and even rum, but which no farmer makes profit of either through ignorance or carelessness; but they use it for the horses mixed with some water.

The price of sugar in the market of Manila and in Iloilo is as follows: First class from \$4 to \$5 per picul in normal times, having sometimes reached to \$5 and \$6, the second class \$4 or \$4.25; third class at \$3.75; and the "corrieinte" or fourth class \$2.50. The "dubit" is not priced in the market.

The land in the island of Negros which is very fertile, so much that a hectare generally gives a produce of 160 to 150 piculs, is worth from \$100

to \$125 for first class ground, and from \$80 to \$90 for the second class and so successively.

The rights by which they obtain these land properties are by those of the law, by inheritance, or prescription, by contract of or by debts and lastly by exchange which the farmers usually do by means of a public writing or contract.

Before ending this long article we will say a few words of the general processes which the cane undergoes in its cultivation. When the cane is brought to the place of grinding after it has been cleaned the top part of the cane is cut about a span, this is called "punta" or point. These in great quantities are steeped in water for two or three days, they are afterwards taken and brought to the field which is already well plowed and cleaned and there they are planted in rows, the distance between each row or bed is about a yard and between each "punta" or stem being half a yard. They are not planted straight but with an inclination of 45 degrees on the earth. It will be well to mention that this planting is made by contract and the cost of each 10,000 stocks planted is \$10.

With the first rains they begin to sprout and at the same time grass grows around. Therefore here we have the next process after the planting, this is called the glamon or that is to say the rooting of the grass and other herbs, which is made by the workmen of the farm, though sometimes it is made by contract costing \$150 the forenamed space or 10,000 stocks.

When the cane is better grown comes the next process, called "tudlin"; this consists in the passing of the plow between each file or bed so as to cut the roots that have grown too long, and also that, as by this time is the rainy season, which is about from June to August, and though the plants are already well grown the rain inundates the fields, and by these canals made by the plow around the plants, the water is kept from them. When the cane is stoutly grown a furrow is made in the middle of the bed, the earth dug out is thrown on the plant, where it is left till the grinding season comes which is about November or December. Then the cane is cut at about 5 inches from the ground; and brought to the grinding and working house in large cars. The short bit of cane that is left after the cutting of the whole field, is burnt to ashes, and from these ashes spring up new cane. When this cane is grown it undergoes the same operations as those of a field newly planted. Fields that are worked in this manner are called "calanaw" and these give better sugar than those newly planted.

It is also a custom of big farmers of fields of great extent, and specially when the ground is old or has been very frequently planted to plant half of the farm one year giving a rest to the other. In the next year this half is planted while the other is resting.

The salary of the day laborer is \$1.25 to \$1.50 per week; each twelve of these are watched by an overseer, whose salary is \$3 per week. Besides the farmer must have a clerk and even two or three whose salary is \$30 minimum, and \$60 maximum. Some farmers have administrators who have a salary of from \$50 to \$100 and \$200.

Some farms are leased out, the rent being in proportion to the amount of piculs the farm gives; the rent is \$3000 if the farm yields 7000 piculs of sugar, and successively the rent of a farm may increase or lessen according to the yield of the farm.

It is really a great pity that in the island of Negros it is not yet known the great and magnificent improvements in the fabrication of sugar that are used in America, Germany, France and other places of Europe. For though European farmers have introduced several improvements for the fabrication of sugar in their farms, as steam engines brought from Europe of 25 and 30 horsepower, with tanks and clarifiers, yet these have been deficient for the juice that passes through the clarifiers into the boilers is here mixed with calx in some quantity and with Cod oil to clean it and clear of its dark color, thus gaining little advantages after many efforts.

The expense of a picul of sugar, counting the expense for planting, salary of field laborers, contractors for the cutting and conveyance of the cane, the bringing of men to Negros from other provinces in the grinding season, gives a total of about \$1.50 per picul; therefore if first class sugar is at \$4.50 in Iloilo the profit of the farmer will be \$3 per picul. Therefore, if the product of his farm is 10,000 piculs annually he will have a net profit of \$30,000.

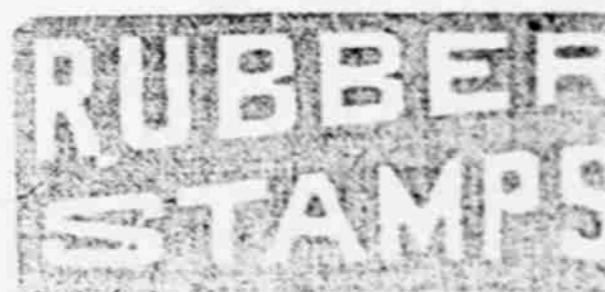
The following is an approximate calculation in regard to the production of sugar in the Philippine Islands.

Pampanga, 800 piculs per annum; Batangas, 9100; Bulacan, 55,700; Pangasinan, 51,500; Laguna, 20,000; Batan, 11,500; Cavite, 10,800; Manila, 7000; Nueva Ecija, 6000; Albay, 5800; Ilocos Sur, 4800; and the other provinces of Luzon produce sugar in less quantities.

The annual production of sugar in the Visayan Islands and others is as follows: Cebu, 174,500 piculs; Iloilo, 59,500; Antique, 25,000; Negros, 2000; Bohol, 20,000; Capiz, 10,000; Misamis, 6000; and other provinces in less quantities.

The exportation of sugar in 1896 was as follows: To Spain, 3,261,513 kilograms; to the United States, 8,672,985 kilograms; to England, 19,739,487 kilograms; to China, 46,127, 980 kilograms; to Japan, 13,211,973 kilograms, and to the English colonies, 8,957,457 kilograms.

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